

Text: Romans 13:11-14 *And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in licentiousness and lewdness, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.*

Theme: **DEAR CHRISTIANS, KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS**

- I) Know the time
- II) Know what this means

Dear fellow redeemed in Jesus Christ, fellow Children of Light,

Have you ever noticed that some mornings are just easier to get out of bed than others? When you excitedly look forward to the events of the day it can make it easy to hop out of bed. You kids probably moan and complain when Mom or Dad wake you up for school in the morning. But on the morning of Christmas you might be out of bed first and even waking Mom and Dad up. With the opening of deer hunting right around the corner, some of our hunters might find that morning easy to get out of bed early for. In fact, on such days you might be so excited that you keep waking up over night wondering if it's morning yet. Nope, 11:30. Now? Nope, 1:30. Is it morning yet? Nope, 4:00. Finally that alarm sounds and it's time to get up and get dressed and enjoy that exciting day.

What about the dawning of Judgment Day? Is that a day you excitedly look forward to? Is that a day for which you wake up every morning hoping that this day will be the day when the trumpet sounds and Jesus returns in glory on His throne, raising the dead, judges the living and the dead? The day when the believers will be taken to heaven forever to be with their God. The day when this sinful world and everything will be destroyed with fire, and the new heavens and the new earth appear. Do you hope that will happen today? Do you hope to hear the trumpet sound even before you get home?

The answer for every Christian should be "Yes, Amen. COME Lord Jesus!" But is it yes for you? Your answer probably reveals where your heart is. Last week in Bible Class we heard Jesus say that where your treasure is there your heart will be also. If you are storing up treasures for yourself here on earth - if your life is focused on the things and pleasures of this world, you probably do not want Jesus to come until you've accomplished those worldly goals. If however you are storing up treasures for yourself in heaven, then you cannot wait for the dawning of that great Day. So where is your heart?

Our study of Paul's letter to the Romans has brought us to the end of chapter 13. In these verses Paul speaks of the coming Day of Christ. He exhorts the Christian to know what time it is and act accordingly. Let us therefore remind ourselves of the time and what that means for us as followers of Christ. May the Spirit guide us and bless us as we examine His holy Word. Amen.

## **I. KNOW THE TIME**

How do you know when to get up in the morning? Some of us require the obnoxious beeping of an alarm clock to sound the arrival of morning, that it is time to awake from slumber and get ready for the day before us. Some of us require setting our alarm 20 minutes early and a

snooze button so we have time to prepare ourselves to wake up. Some of us need a parent to shake us from our slumber. And finally some of us have that internal alarm clock that wakes us up well before sunrise.

As disciples of Jesus Christ do we need a spiritual alarm clock which sounds - ***“Now it is high time to awake out of sleep,”*** as Paul says here in our text? We shouldn't need a reminder to be spiritually alert and awake because we know that Jesus could return at any moment. In the Gospels Jesus tells His disciples multiple times to “watch” - be spiritually alert - because He will return as a thief in the night, when we least expect it. Likewise the Apostles throughout the New Testament remind us again and again to be ready. There should then be no need for a reminder - Christ's return should be in the forefront of our minds every day!

Yet we do need that spiritual alarm clock, don't we. We get tied up and tied down with the things of this world. We become enticed by the vain pleasures of this world. We are rocked into spiritual slumber thinking that Christ has been telling His believers to be alert and watchful for 2,000 years and He didn't return during those centuries. We may begin to think that His return is afar off. Then rather than being on guard and alert, we begin to let our spiritual guard down and our focus turned from heavenward all the way to earth bound and its vain pleasures.

But what does Paul say in our text? ***“Our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent the day is at hand.”*** The night of this world of sin is quickly drawing to a close. The Day of Christ return is beginning to dawn. “But Pastor,” you might argue, “Paul wrote nearly 2,000 years ago that the day was at hand. And we know that Christ did not return right away. What's to say it might not be another 2,000 years until that day dawns?” This certainly is true. Yet I would have you call to mind the number of Christians you know whose time of grace came to an end abruptly or unexpectedly. The ones who had no diagnosis from a doctor that their lives were drawing to a close. The ones who suddenly were taken from us. Their salvation was much nearer than when they first believed. I doubt any of them woke up that morning thinking this would be their last day on this earth. Many of them no doubt believed they would live to a ripe old age, but God knew better and took them from this vale of tears to be with Himself in Paradise at the time of His choosing.

Therefore the message from Paul to all Christians is to know that the night of our lives in the darkness of this world is far spent, the Day is at hand. We ought to think of our lives right now as being in that time when the darkness of night begins to fade and gives way to the approaching sunrise. Our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The trumpet may sound or our lives may come to an end. It will come as a thief in the night, at an hour and day when no one knows, but let us, dear Christians, know what time it is.

## **II. Know what this means**

When the alarm clock goes off in the morning no one has to tell you what that means. Or when Mom hollers up the stairs that “You're going to miss the bus!” you realize that now it is time to get up. Likewise we know what comes next. Next we have to get out of our sleeping clothes and put on our daytime clothes. Unless it is a sick day, or pajama day at school, we know that on most occasions what you wear to bed at night is different than what you wear to school or to work. But do we know what it means when Paul says that ***“now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for not our salvation is nearer than when we first believed”?***

Think back to the week we've just completed. Over the course of this week there are many things that you were able to accomplish and some things that you were unable to complete.

Romans 13:11-14 - "Dear Christians, Know What Time it Is"

10.5.2008 ~ Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Hecla, SD ~ Pastor N. Pfeiffer

---

But can you say that we lived this week "**walking properly**," as Paul says here? Were there things you did this week that you would be ashamed if other people would have seen what you were doing or known what you were thinking? More than that, were there things done or thoughts you had that you would have been embarrassed and ashamed if the trumpet had sounded at that moment and Christ returned to find you in such a state?

Paul mentions "**putting off the works of darkness**" here in our text. These are dark, sinful deeds. Many of which, not coincidentally, are done under the cover of darkness. By doing so man thinks he is able to hide them. Paul here mentions revelry - or what we would call partying hard - and drunkenness. Things which are common place among our acquaintances young and old. Likewise with licentiousness and lewdness - both words which deal with sexual excess. Not the healthy God-pleasing sexual encounters of a married couple, but of sexual promiscuity which we see so prominently in the lives of our acquaintances. And also Paul mentions strife and envy. Something we see in the workplace, in the political world, and even in the homes of our friends and neighbors. All things are the dark deeds of the sinful flesh.

Dear Christians, knowing what time it is - knowing that our salvation is nearer than we first believed, knowing that the night of this world is quickly coming to a close and the dawn of Christ's return is upon us let us walk or conduct our lives properly. "**Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.**" Don't look at the behavior of your friends and neighbors as something to envy, but see it for what it is - darkness and sinful. Works which are done by individuals who don't know what time it is. Works which reveal that they are not expecting the Judge of all the earth to return at any moment. But we know, don't we? Cast it off the works of darkness like you take off your pajamas and put on the armor of light like you put on your school or work clothes. The armor of light is the shield and protection which God supplies by His Spirit working through the Word and Sacrament.

Paul concludes in the last verse of our text, "**But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provisions for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.**" Remember those things you did which you would have been ashamed to have your family or your Savior find you doing? What led up to those sins? So often we place ourselves in compromising situations which lead us into all sorts of sinful thoughts and acts. We watch dirty movies and we are surprised when we find our mind wandering to lustful thoughts. We do internet searches on the women of the world and are surprised when our eyes come upon filthy websites. We hang out with friends that like to get drunk on the weekends and we are led to get drunk or drink underage. We put up with gossipers and we find ourselves spreading that gossip, though it ruins the name of our neighbor. When we make provisions for the flesh and we should not be surprised when our flesh seeks to fulfill those lusts.

Instead, Paul says, make no provisions for the flesh. Don't rent dirty movies. Stop watching those TV and reading those books which glorify sinful living. Install an internet filter on your computer to aid you against such temptations. If your friends won't stop excessive drinking or drinking underage or gossiping don't hang out with them any more. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ. In your baptism you were baptized into Christ and you put on Christ. Jesus Christ and all He did was placed upon you in your baptism. You were robed in His righteousness. You died with Him and were buried with Him and you rose with Him.

Now Paul says, put on the Lord Jesus Christ every day just like you change from your

sleeping clothes to your work clothes. Remember what we heard in the first verse of chapter 12, ***“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”*** No one showed us what it means to present your body as a living sacrifice than did our Lord Jesus Christ. Every day His primary concern was the will of His heavenly Father, with little or no regard for self. It was the Father’s will that His Son live a substitutionary life for sinners, so Jesus was born and lived a life free of sin in our place. It was the Father’s will that His Son suffer and die for the sins of the whole world, so Jesus went to the cross. Jesus presented His body as the perfect living sacrifice. He removed our sin forever. All of our guilt has been paid for by Jesus.

We are now at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have been made members of the family of God through our baptism. Heaven is our eternal dwelling place. We are now children of Light, let us walk as children of Light. Rather than giving provisions to our flesh, **let us daily give provisions to our faith** - putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, conducting ourselves properly as we look for the return of our Savior and King. Provide for the needs of our faith by daily turning to His holy Word - whether it be a chapter or just a verse to feed on throughout the day. Dear Christians, it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our final salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night of this world is far spent, the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ is at hand. Even so, come Lord Jesus! Amen!